

MINUTES

Erie County Council

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Brian Shank, Chairman
Mary Rennie, Vice Chairwoman
Charlie Bayle
André R. Horton
Ellen Schauerma
Terry M. Scutella
Jim Winarski

Public Hearing

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:31pm.

Members present: Chairman Shank, Vice-Chairwoman Rennie, Charlie Bayle, Andre Horton, Ellen Schauerma, Terry M. Scutella, and Jim Winarski (via phone)

Others present: Julie Slomski, Lynn Armel, Jon Whaley, and Megan Moore

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

The proposed plan can be found at

<https://eriecountypa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Complete-and-FINAL-Draft-Erie-Recycling-Strategic-Plan-Erie-County.pdf> .

COMMENTS FROM PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Lynn Armel, Planning Department:

The plan was paid for by a grant from the DEP, a renowned consultant was used, and no county funds are needed. She presented the key recommendations from the report, and a letter in support of the plan from Crawford.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Scutella questioned how much money was received from grants (\$61,000). He then questioned how that money would be spent.

Ms. Armel answered the money was used to hire the consultant. She cited the implementation chart, and gave the example of a 902 Grant for communication and outreach.

Mr. Scutella asked if education was the starting point, what would be the end point?

Ms. Armel stated the goal was for recycling in Erie County to be sustainable, and to improve the rate and quality of the recyclables.

Mr. Whaley stated a possibility for the future would be a County Waste Authority, and mandated recycling throughout the County.

Ms. Armel stated joint bidding was also a possible future endeavor for outlying municipalities, so companies would have to extend contracts to lower populated areas.

Mr. Horton (parts of his comments are inaudible) questioned the 300k grant listed, and if it had to be applied for, and if there was competition for the grant.

Ms. Armel stated the grant had already been awarded on Earth Day.

Mr. Horton then questioned the consultant used (Nestor, Michele). He questioned

IRG, and was interested in talking to them. He stated this was a duplication of efforts. Mr. Horton also commented on a 3-year plan. He stated this was not the proper protocol for a public hearing. Mr. Horton apologized to Ms. Armel for his previous statement; he found the email with the information that had been sent, but it was a while ago. He also said she was doing a good job.

Mr. Whaley, Planning, stated a feasibility plan would be made, but it has not been done yet.

Ms. Armel noted the consultant reported the state of recycling in Erie County, the problems of recycling in the County, coming up with potential solutions and areas to be explored.

Mr. Horton questioned what the ask was from the Council on this Resolution.

Ms. Armel stated the wish was for the Council to support this, and say yes, we need to improve recycling and collaborate with the municipalities, and that this is important.

(Inaudible comments from Mr. Horton)

Mr. Horton asked if the consultant was local.

Ms. Armel stated Ms. Nestor is located in Pittsburgh, well respected in the industry, is on the legislative committee for Professional Recyclers of PA (PROP), and chairs two boards for recycling and waste.

Mr. Scutella asked what Erie County's role would be in this, possibly to attempt to fix problems with help from other entities.

Ms. Armel replied that this plan will look at potential solutions.

Chairman Shank expressed frustration with glass recycling, and questioned if this would address that issue.

Ms. Armel replied with possible solutions for glass recycling that could be adopted.

Mr. Whaley stated they are trying to help the existing companies in the area.

Mrs. Rennie questioned what studies have been done with recyclables after they are collected. She'd heard a lot goes to landfills.

Ms. Armel responded that this is where education is imperative, so that people recycle correctly, and it is usable.

Mr. Horton questioned if there would be a cost for Erie County.

Ms. Armel stated it's a possibility, but currently we pay out more than other counties and municipalities.

Mr. Horton asked if there was a poll or survey for the people to gauge interest?

Ms. Armel replied they had surveyed the municipalities, and there was information on the website. She stated she does feel familiar with the issues, and the community needs and questions.

Mr. Horton questioned if there could be a public hearing about the feasibility plan.

Ms. Armel stated there was a notice posted in the paper twice.

Mr. Horton stated more than checking a box needed to be done.

Ms. Armel stated she presented to the COG as well as the PennFuture group, and the steering committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Scutella made a motion to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04pm.